'"ROTTEN PROTESTANTS": PROTESTANT HOME RULERS AND THE ULSTER LIBERAL ASSOCIATION, 1906-1918'*

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ABSTRACT. *This article assesses 'Rotten Protestants', or Protestant home rulers in Ulster, by means of an analysis of the Ulster Liberal Association, from its founding in 1906 until its virtual disappearance by 1918. It argues that Ulster liberalism has been neglected or dismissed in Irish historiography, and that this predominantly Protestant, pro-home rule organisation, with its origins in nineteenth-century radicalism, complicates our understanding of the era. It has previously been argued that this tradition did not really exist: this paper uses prosopography to demonstrate the existence of a significant group of Protestant liberal activists in Ulster, as well as to uncover their social, denominational, and geographic profile. Ulster liberals endured attacks and boycotting; this article highlights the impact of this inter-communal violence on the group. Although Ulster liberalism had a substantial grassroots organisation, it went into sharp decline after 1912. This paper describes how the third home rule crisis, the outbreak of the Great War, and the Easter Rising of 1916 prompted a hardening of attitudes and proved detrimental to the survival of a politically-dissenting tradition within Ulster Protestantism.*

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On the evening of 10 February 1912, a prominent northern Irish politician and his wife sought to embark on the steamer to London, from the port of Larne, about twenty miles north of Belfast. They were met by a crowd of some 600 protesters, who blocked their way and roared 'to hell with the Pope', 'traitor', 'turncoat', and 'no home rule'. Protected by just six policemen, the crowd rushed the couple, whom they pelted with rotten eggs, herrings, and bags of flour. The politician, who had his clothes destroyed and was struck in the face with a fish, knew he was lucky to have escaped serious injury; he had been en-route to London to seek police protection.[1]

What had he done to invite the fury of the mob? He was neither a Catholic, a republican, nor, by most definitions of the word, a nationalist. He was William James Pirrie, 1st Baron Pirrie, perhaps the greatest shipbuilder in the world, whose Harland & Wolff firm had built the *Titanic*, and employed a largely-Protestant workforce of about 25,000 in an enormous yard in Belfast. Pirrie's crime, in Ulster unionist eyes, was his advocacy of home rule for Ireland, in defiance of the views of the vast majority of his fellow Protestants, and above all, his membership of the despised Ulster Liberal Association (ULA). The treatment of Lord Pirrie and his wife by an enraged crowd highlights an aspect of Irish history that has been almost entirely forgotten: that of the Ulster Protestant home ruler. During this period Ulster unionist attempts to project an image of Protestant unanimity in favour of the retention of the Act of Union with Great Britain were undermined by the presence of an organized Ulster liberal tradition, which forged an alliance with the largely-Catholic Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP), advocated an all-Ireland home rule settlement, and rejected what they perceived as sectarianism in Irish politics. Ulster liberals reward study for several reasons. They present a case study of how a religious or ethnic group treats political renegades from within their own ranks. Ulster liberals suffered a campaign of boycotting and harassment; the lack of interest in their plight shown by contemporaries and later historians demonstrates the

contingent nature of political and academic interest: with few influential spokesmen to take up their case, the Protestant home rule tradition was allowed to melt away. Secondly, they hint at the endurance of denominational divisions within Ulster Protestantism, which the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, which came into effect in 1871, and the home rule campaign in the 1880s were supposed to have eliminated. Finally, Ulster liberalism highlights the diversity of Protestant culture in Ulster in the period before the third home rule crisis, the Easter Rising of 1916, and the 1918 general election led to a final polarisation along religious lines. Ulster liberals were willing to support the creation of a Dublin parliament which they knew would be Catholic dominated, and, as will be shown, strongly opposed the Ulster Covenant. For Ulstermen, non-conformism could mean more than one thing.

I

Protestant and unionist divisions in the post-1921 era have received much scholarly attention. The pioneering work of Paul Bew, Peter Gibbon, and Henry Patterson reveals the frequently fractious nature of Ulster politics after partition.[2] Graham Walker and Christopher Norton have demonstrated how working class labour activism provoked severe anxiety among the Northern Irish government, who feared the defection of the working class from the unionist movement.[3] Colin Reid has highlighted the challenges to Official unionist hegemony posed by Independent unionists, which forced James Craig, the Northern prime minister, into a dual strategy of high spending on welfare and use of sectarian rhetoric to counter this threat.[4] But what of the years before?

The existence of a substantial Protestant dissident tradition in the years prior to partition complicates the well-established narrative of Ulster history. This states that a substantial body of Ulster Protestants – especially Presbyterians – discarded ambitions for

revolution after 1798 and instead adopted a liberal programme of parliamentary reform, agrarian reform, and Catholic Emancipation, but came to view the Union as the best guarantee of good government in Ireland.[5] However, the Liberal Party in Ireland, which had taken a record 66 seats in 1868, was, from 1874, eclipsed by the home rule movement. However, in Ulster, Liberal commitment to land reform ensured that the party, which had gained the adherence of both Catholics and Protestants, remained a substantial force. Liberal ascendancy in Ulster could not survive the threat from home rule; by 1886 it had given way to a religious-informed division between unionists and nationalists.[6] From 1886 Ulster unionism was composed of Conservatives in an 'uneasy, if lasting, alliance' with Liberal unionists.[7] In 1905 the Ulster Unionist Council was formed to coordinate supporters of the constitutional status quo in the province; this reflected the eclipse of southern Unionism by a vibrant Ulster movement with cross-sectional appeal.[8] During the home rule crisis of 1912 to 1914, confident, well-organized Ulster unionism stage managed displays of political unanimity among Ulster Protestants, eventually forcing the British government to concede partition, culminating in the creation of Northern Ireland in 1920.[9]

There is little to criticize in this narrative. However, the survival of a radical home rule tradition among Ulster Protestants, largely uncoordinated before 1906, but embodied in the Ulster Liberal Association after that year, has elicited strikingly little scholarly interest. One partial exception to this trend is the work of J.R.B. McMinn. McMinn is sceptical about the existence of a widespread Protestant home rule phenomenon in Ulster. In numerous articles and reviews, and a calendar of correspondence, he has pursued the notion of Protestant home rule activism in Ulster, which he maintains has been exaggerated.[10] For McMinn, the 1913 Protestant home rule meeting was little more than a 'gigantic political illusion', and the importance of the pro-self government campaign of James Brown Armour, the Presbyterian minister of Ballymoney, County Antrim, has been exaggerated by later

'political polemicists seeking the holy grail of protestant nationalism'. [11] McMinn underestimates the significance of the Ulster Liberal Association, an overwhelmingly Protestant body with strong grassroots support, a wide-ranging weekly newspaper, and a well-developed branch network throughout Ulster, which adopted an explicitly pro-home rule position in 1910. He fails to distinguish this group from the entirely separate Ulster Liberal Unionist Association,[12] and ascribes liberal unionism to one of the ULA's leading figures, although he adopted a pro-home rule stance from 1910.[13] When assessing a phenomenon such as the Protestant home rule movement, it is important not just to focus on well known, often-charismatic figures, but also to assess the wider associational culture in which these individuals operated. The Protestant home rule tradition, although small, embodied an important but overlooked tradition in Ulster, which transcended the religious and political divide in the province, and undermines claims of a unionist consensus among members of the reformed churches.

II

It was W.E. Gladstone's conversion to home rule, and his introduction of the first home rule bill in 1886 that prompted the split in Ulster liberalism. The majority, who feared a Catholic-dominated Dublin parliament would be reactionary and injurious to social advancement, formed the Ulster Liberal Unionist Association. Many Ulster liberals who were loyal to Gladstone joined the Ulster wing of the Irish Protestant Home Rule Association (IPHRA).[14] The IPHRA can be viewed as a Gladstonian-liberal predecessor to the ULA. Over the following three decades, Ulster Liberal unionists and the Protestant home rulers would maintain a high level of personal enmity.[15] The IPHRA was founded with the purpose of undermining unionist claims that Irish Protestants were unanimously opposed to home rule. The organisation, which was chiefly active from 1886 to 1887, held public meetings and

published pamphlets in its attempt to inculcate nationalist sentiment in Protestants, as well as providing a pool of speakers for IPP rallies.

Although small, this group had two distinct and sometimes antagonistic wings.[16] The Belfast executive was dominated by mainly-Nonconformist representatives of Ulster tenant farmers, such as Thomas Shillington (d.1925), a Portadown-based Methodist and linen manufacturer who was president of the organisation, T.A Dickson, a Presbyterian who became Liberal MP for St Stephen's Green, and John Pinkerton, a Unitarian who became IPP member for Galway. The Ulster IPHRA was characterized not by romantic attachment to a restored Irish parliament, but rather by adoration of Gladstone and obsession with the land issue. For the bulk of these men home rule was merely another liberal reform, designed to improve the government of Ireland.[17]

The Dublin executive was dominated by a talented circle of young mainly-Church of Ireland activists from landed, clerical and professional backgrounds. Its most important figures were the economist C.H. Oldham, and the poet and journalist T.W. Rolleston. Their broad circle included W.B. Yeats, Stephen Gwynn, and Maud Gonne. This milieu idolized the romantic figure of veteran Fenian John O'Leary, and adopted an advanced, sometimes republican rhetoric.[18] The pseudo-aristocratic nature of the group was underlined by members' lack of interest in the land question, and staunch defence of the role of landlords in Irish life.[19] Although the Dublin IPHRA was intellectually distinguished, its membership was small. In contrast, the Ulster IPHRA enjoyed a strong degree of popular support, stemming from a tradition of Nonconformist radicalism in the province, as well as the strength of tenant-farmer loyalty to Gladstone.[20] However, this group represented only a small minority of Ulster Protestant opinion, the majority of which was opposed to home rule. In the 1886 general election, which was fought on the question of home rule, the IPP stood aside in six

Ulster constituencies, which were unsuccessfully contested by IPHRA members.[21] This formed the basis of an electoral pact with the IPP which would endure until 1910.

In 1890, the IPP split, following the revelation that its leader, Charles Stewart Parnell, had conducted an extramarital affair. In the aftermath of the split, carefully-concealed denominational division came to the fore. The IPHRA split on geographic, and thus largely denominational, lines. The largely-Presbyterian Ulster IPHRA went anti-Parnellite. The Dublin executive went overwhelmingly Parnellite, chiefly due to members' unease at priestly anti-Parnell intrigue. The Parnell split had a detrimental effect on the Ulster IPHRA, and by Parnell's death in 1891, the Ulster organisation was essentially defunct.[22] However, in 1892 a defector from liberal unionism emerged, in the guise of the Rev. James Brown Armour (1841–1928), who became a charismatic spokesman for Ulster Protestant home rulers. Armour, whose Ballymoney church was based in a radical stronghold in Antrim, had opposed the first home rule bill. By 1892, having become convinced that unionism was benefiting Anglicans and landowners at the expense of Presbyterians, he converted to a pro-home rule position, and endorsed liberal Presbyterian candidates in the election of that year.[23] The following year, at a specially-convened general assembly of the Presbyterian Church, Armour moved a pro-home rule amendment. His speech, in which he stated that 'The principle of Home Rule is a Presbyterian principle', caused a sensation, and saw him emerge as the best-known Protestant home ruler in Ulster.[24] Armour helped organize a Presbyterian memorial to Gladstone, which sought to demonstrate Irish Presbyterian support for home rule. Poor organisation and social pressure from unionists impeded the protest, which obtained 3,535 signatures.[25]

Following the Conservative victory in the 1895 general election, the Protestant home rule tradition in Ulster fell into an eleven-year – if not fifteen-year – decline. Nonconformist tenant farmers, who might have proved amenable to radical constitutional reform, found a

new champion in T.W. Russell, the land activist and Liberal unionist member for South Tyrone. Dissatisfaction with land reform led Russell to break with the government in 1900. In 1902 and 1903 candidates endorsed by Russell won two by-election victories. Although Russell repeatedly affirmed his unionist stance, he had grown closer to nationalists since 1900, especially in relation to the land issue. In 1906 nine 'Russellite' candidates ran in Ulster. However, to the relief of unionists, they failed to make a breakthrough, taking just one seat beside Russell's.[26]

In a symbolic act, Russell used his speech the night he was elected to defect to the Liberal party.[27] The other successful Russellite, R.G. Glendinning, a Baptist linen manufacturer who took North Antrim, also joined the Liberal benches.[28] Although the Russellite return was dire, the group took an average of 44% in the constituencies they contested,[29] which demonstrated the viability of a moderate party in Ulster.

III

In late-April 1906, at a meeting in Belfast, the Russellites were subsumed into a new body, the Ulster Liberal Association.[30] Although speakers at the meeting affirmed their unionism, the ULA's enmity to the Liberal unionists, and support for the government, did imply acquiescence to some form of constitutional reform for Ireland, as did the organizers' statement that the movement would 'be founded simply upon Liberal principles, without any [political] tests'.[31] The organisation, which was headquartered in Rosemary Street, Belfast, quickly subsumed smaller liberal, radical and farmer's groups throughout the six north-eastern counties, and developed a substantial network of local branches. Although affiliated with the Liberal Party of Great Britain, whose programme they supported, the ULA maintained a largely autonomous existence. Delegations of activists did meet senior British

liberals during their rare visits to Ireland, and party whips offered advice to the ULA during general elections.[32]

The revival of liberalism in Ireland was not confined to Ulster. In October 1906, the Dublin Liberal Association (DLA) was set up, under the presidency of T.W. Russell, who was about to be appointed vice-president of the Department of Agricultural and Technical Instruction for Ireland, a post he would retain until 1918.[33] Russell's move to Dublin would ultimately damage Ulster liberalism, by depriving it of its best organizer and most charismatic speaker. The DLA was initially more constitutionally radical than its Ulster sister: it adopted a pro-home rule stance early in its existence.

Who were the liberals of Ulster? In the absence of nominal rolls of ULA members, reference has been made to the *Ulster Guardian*'s accounts of party meetings, where certain supporters' names were recorded. These names are usually those of prominent or wealthy ULA activists, rather than the grassroots, who were mainly poor Nonconformist tenant or ex-tenant farmers and artisans. However, the sample is useful, as it provides insight into the denominational, socio-economic and geographic profile of a substantial group of ULA activists. Furthermore, assembling this sample allows one to demonstrate that the ULA did not amount to a political illusion, but rather was a well-developed organisation worthy of scholarly attention.

307 members of the ULA have been traced.[34] This sample represents those listed as attending ULA meetings in the period from which the organisation embraced home rule. As such it excludes most rank-and-file members, whose attendance would not ordinarily be recorded. The organisation was overwhelmingly Protestant. Of the 206 members whose denomination has been ascertained, 188, or almost 92%, belonged to the reformed churches. However, the vast majority of these were Nonconformists, and few were Anglican. This suggests that some traces of Ulster's traditional link between Nonconformism and liberalism

on one hand, and Anglicanism and toryism on the other, endured into the early decades of the Twentieth Century. Presbyterians formed the significantly largest group, with 116 individuals, followed by Methodists with 25; there were only nineteen Anglicans. There were also six Baptists, six Unitarians, three Congregationalists, two Quakers, two Non-subscribing Presbyterians, and one Reformed Presbyterian. Comparison with the membership of the Dublin Liberal Association demonstrates the extent to which Ulster liberalism was an almost entirely Protestant enterprise. Greater religious stratification in Ulster resulted in a smaller number of Catholics joining the ULA: 5%, compared with almost 28% in the DLA.[35] No Catholics played a prominent role in the ULA. The denominational background of the ULA demonstrates two things: first, that there was no substance in the frequent unionist allegation that the organisation was dominated by Catholics; and second, that a substantial body of Nonconformists retained Gladstonian liberal sympathies.

Analysis of the occupation of ULA members suggests that, as with the IPHRA, radical Protestant tenant farmers during this period gave leadership roles to large farmers and merchants with agricultural connections.[36] There were 31 farmers, 28 merchants (with those in the linen, flour and seed business especially well-represented), fifteen businessmen, fourteen barristers, ten manufacturers, eleven solicitors, nine managers, eight physicians, four academics, four journalists, and five Protestant clergymen. 26 had a manual trade. At least 62 of the sample were JPs, partially a result of a campaign by Armour and other ULA figures to have liberals and Presbyterians advanced to the magistracy.[37] The predominantly Anglican landed gentry was scarcely represented. Excluding new creations there was only one nobleman: Bernard Forbes, 8th Earl of Granard (1874-1948), a Catholic peer who held junior rank in the Liberal government.[38] Geographically, all nine Ulster counties were represented, although 95% of activists came from the six north-eastern counties (Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Derry, and Tyrone,) where Protestants formed the highest proportion of

population.[39] Two thirds came from County Antrim (including Belfast) and County Down, and there was disproportionate representation from the Route area of north Antrim and the villages of Saintfield and Scarva in Down, all of them traditional radical centres. This suggests that political diversity could best take hold in areas that had a pre-existing tradition of radicalism, as well as a large underlying population of Protestants. Furthermore, Henry Patterson has argued that ethnic tensions were higher in what later became the border counties.[40] These more vulnerable Protestant communities, on the outlying, southern regions of Ulster, showed less susceptibility to constitutional change and more willingness to conform to unionist orthodoxy.

From 1906 to 1910, with the Liberal government enjoying a majority, and with little likelihood of a home rule bill, the ULA was able to avoid potentially divisive constitutional debate. They instead focussed on domestic issues of concern to their base, such as housing, railways, education, and above all, land reform.[41] Ulster liberals, however, gave strong support to the abortive Irish Council Bill in 1907, which promised a modest decentralisation of power to an Irish central authority.[42]

During this period, the ULA forged close links with the renegade Independent Orange Order (IOO). The IOO was founded in June 1903 by supporters of the populist street preacher T.H. Sloan (1870-1941), who alleged that Protestant interests were being neglected by the Ulster unionist leadership in the House of Commons.[43] The IOO might have remained a marginalized working class splinter were it not for the emergence of Robert Lindsay Crawford (1868-1945) as the leading figure in the group. An iconoclastic and intellectually-brave journalist and low-church Anglican, Crawford's hostility to toryism and the British government and would lead him to first to endorse Irish self-government, and later a republic, which he presumed would embody secular or anti-clerical ideals.[44] Crawford's attempts to reorient Orangeism reached its apogee in the Magheramorne manifesto, which was read at an

IOO meeting in July 1905. Magheramorne made an even-handed attack on clericalism, demanded the expedition of land purchase, and called for the union of Protestants and Catholics on the basis of shared Irish nationality.[45] The organisation enjoyed steady growth, mainly confined to working-class Belfast and the liberal redoubt of North Antrim. By early 1904 it claimed nine lodges in Ballymoney alone.[46] The organisation peaked at 44 lodges in 1907.[47] Although the Independent threat to the official order did not endure, their existence underlines the diversity of Ulster Protestant politics during this period. The common ground that existed for a period between the IOO and the ULA is evidenced by the appointment, in January 1907, of Crawford as editor of the *Ulster Guardian,* the weekly organ of the ULA.[48]

Crawford immediately shifted the *Ulster Guardian* to an explicitly nationalist viewpoint. He abused the Conservatives, scorned denominational education, and attacked the old Order's allegiance to Britain. A series of articles on Thomas Davis**,** the founder of the Young Ireland political and cultural movement, invited readers to look to the Protestant past for inspiration.[49] Crawford's *Guardian* supported the workers during the Belfast dock strike of 1907, when Protestants and Catholics temporarily, and with the support of the IOO, combined to demand better wages and conditions.

There is evidence that just two years before the ULA adopted a pro-home rule position, senior members of the organisation sought to stifle those activists who promoted self-government. In May 1908 Robert Lindsay Crawford lost the editorship of the *Ulster Guardian*, due to his advocacy of home rule through that newspaper's columns. The four directors who ordered his replacement were senior ULA activists, all of whom would attend, from 1910, party meetings at which home rule was promoted.[50] Crawford's replacement as editor of the *Guardian* was William Hamilton Davey (d.1920). Davey was a Presbyterian clergyman's son from County Antrim, who had trained as a barrister.[51] Although Crawford had been sacked for advocating home rule, his successor did nothing to change the

Guardian's stance; Davey's accession to the editorship coincided with a shift towards moderate nationalism by ULA members.[52] By 1910 Davey had become a popular and eloquent spokesman for Ulster Protestant home rulers.

In 1910, the leader of the ULA was Edward Archdale (1850-1916), a JP and DL for Fermanagh, who was one of the few Anglican country gentlemen in the organisation. The other leading figures included: Thomas Shillington, who was vice-president; Sir William J. Baxter, a Presbyterian wholesale druggist, who also served as vice-president; and Henry H. Graham, a Baptist property broker and JP, the honorary secretary.[53] Although he never led the party, Lord Pirrie (1847–1924), a charismatic and intelligent figure, was the man most associated with liberalism in Ulster. Formerly a Liberal unionist, Pirrie's defection marked him as a turncoat among his unionist co-religionists, and his character was frequently maligned in the press.

With the IPP standing aside in their favour, the ULA fielded seven candidates in the January 1910 election. The ULA took only one seat in the election. Redmond John Barry (1866-1913), the attorney general for Ireland, and the sole Catholic to run for the party, retained the North Tyrone seat he had won in a by-election in 1907.[54] T.W. Russell narrowly lost his seat in South Tyrone. In each seat the ULA candidate fought a straight contest against a unionist; their average share of the vote amounted to just under 44.5% of the poll, a figure strikingly-similar to that gained by Russellite candidates in 1906.[55] This showing, which was aided by support from Catholic nationalist voters, gave the ULA some grounds for optimism.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to reliably calculate the numbers of Catholic and Protestant voters in each Ulster division.[56] This complicates efforts to estimate the extent of popular Protestant support for the ULA. However, contemporaries generally placed the figure at about 10%. The ultra-unionist *Northern Constitution* stated that ten in every hundred Protestants were home rulers.[57] The *Freeman's Journal* put the number of Protestant home

rulers in Ulster at 10%.[58] Less credibly, the Protestant IPP member of parliament Samuel Young claimed that 12-15% of Ulster Protestants supported the third home rule bill.[59] In light of these comments, and considering the substantial number of Protestants who refused to sign the Covenant (see below), it is reasonable to estimate that about 10% of Ulster Protestants endorsed home rule in 1912.

The election resulted in the return of H.H. Asquith's Liberals to power, dependent on the votes of John Redmond's IPP. The failure of Asquith's attempts to pass the Parliament Bill, which would have abolished the Lords' veto (making possible the progress of a home rule bill) led the prime minister to request another dissolution, in November of that year. By December 1910 the ULA had cast off any ambivalence about home rule, and declared itself strongly in favour of the measure. Its election manifesto denigrated what it claimed were attempts by unionists to inflame sectarian passions:

> Our position as Protestants and Ulster Liberals appears … clear. Our Nationalist fellow-countrymen desire no separation from the Imperial Union. We should listen to no such suggestion; we are proud of our share of the glory and renown of the flag under which we were born and under which we hope to die. We are true Unionists in the best sense of the word. A sullen discontented Ireland is a source of weakness; a contented, pacified and prosperous Ireland will give us a new strength and solidarity. Only a large and generous measure of Home Rule can achieve that happy result. [60]

The election had not a happy result for the ULA, however. It again fielded seven candidates, although only Barry prevailed. The ULA's declaration for home rule had little impact on their vote, which at 43.3% was scarcely lower than December.[61] A pamphlet published by the ULA in 1913 gives a good indication of the organisation's ideology during this period. *What liberalism has done for the people* focussed largely on domestic rather than constitutional issues: the Liberal Party, it argued, was responsible for the unparalleled

increase in prosperity, growth in trade, and expansion of commerce, since the Victorian era. It contrasted the Liberals' success in passing the 1908 Old-Age Pensions Act and the 1909 Irish Land Act, with what they claimed was a long history of Ulster Unionist opposition to socially progressive legislation. 'The Ulster Unionists have never once thrown in their lot with any measure for the uplifting of the working classes or the poor, but have been – and are today – the advance guard of reaction.' In terms of home rule, the pamphlet's authors were, in a manner reminiscent of the Ulster IPHRA in the late 1880s, eager to present the measure as a liberal reform, the 'first step in the large policy of relieving the congestion in the Imperial Parliament … by the delegation of local matters to the different constituent units'.[62] This statement may explain the principal ideological difference between Catholic home rulers, who supported the IPP, and Protestant home rulers, who supported the ULA. For Catholics, Irish self-government was an insuppressible demand, borne of Ireland's ancient and unalterable status as a nation; for Protestants, home rule was characterized as a means of improving the government of Ireland, and lessening divisions between creeds and classes. Ulster Protestants who advocated home rule sought to ultimately strengthen the connection between Ireland and Britain and the Crown. Much Protestant home rule activism was the repackaging of the old Gladstonian liberal programme.

With the passing of the Parliament Act of 1911, which replaced the Lords' veto with a right to delay non-money bills for two sessions, the way was clear for the Liberal government to introduce a third home rule bill in 1912. The threat of home rule led to an increase in sectarian tension in Ulster. Protestant liberals, labelled 'Rotten Protestants' or 'Rotten Prods' by their unionist co-religionists, alleged a campaign of accelerating victimisation against them.[63]

IV

In January 1912, Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, agreed to speak at a large ULA demonstration to be held in the Ulster Hall in Belfast, the following month. This provoked outrage among Ulster unionists, who pledged to prevent the meeting from taking place, stating that the Hall, at which Randolph Churchill – the father of the First Lord – had made a celebrated defence of the status quo, was 'consecrated to the Union'.[64] The proposed presence of IPP leader John Redmond and Joseph Devlin, the leader of Belfast's nationalists, on the platform afforded unionists the chance to claim that the Ulster Liberal demonstration would, in fact, have a Catholic majority. The ULA executive denied this, and issued a statement denouncing what they claimed was a unionist attack on freedom of speech and assembly. It stated that, 'inasmuch as the membership of the Association is almost exclusively Protestant, the meeting will be in like proportion a Protestant one', and that names and addresses of attendees would be preserved for corroboration.[65]

In an open letter to Churchill, Lord Londonderry, the president of the Ulster Unionist Council, threatened violence.

> Having regard to the intense state of feeling which has been created by your proposed action, the Ulster Unionist Council cannot accept any responsibility with reference to your visit to Belfast, and they do not desire to give any assurance that they may be unable to fulfil.[66]

Eventually, under threat of serious disturbance, the ULA agreed to instead hold the meeting in the Celtic Park football ground.[67] Fears of major rioting in the city, and for the safety of Churchill, prompted the drafting in of about 3,500 men from the south, using six special trains.[68] This was not enough to prevent the First Lord from receiving an extremely hostile reception when he disembarked at Larne. On arriving at York Road terminus in Belfast, Churchill, described as looking 'exceedingly nervous and ill-at-ease', faced attempts to assault him that were prevented by police, and at one stage his car was blocked by a mob.[69]

Churchill was afforded a more cordial reception at Celtic Park, where an estimated 6,000 people heard him speak. He stated that the proposed home rule bill would reconcile Ireland to the Crown and the empire, would offer safeguards to Protestants, effect reconciliation between religious groups in Ireland, and ensure continued social and economic progress.[70] Despite attempts by suffragists to interrupt proceedings, Churchill's speech was favourably received, and was followed by speeches by Shillington, Sir Samuel Keightly, Redmond and Devlin, which praised the government's Irish policy. On returning to Larne after spending only seven-and-a-half hours in Ulster, Churchill again faced a hostile unionist crowd. The authorities had managed to avoid a serious outbreak of violence during the First Lord's visit. However, it was clear that the position of Protestant home rulers in Ulster had become precarious. Two days after this Lord Pirrie and his wife suffered the attack described at the head of this article. The Celtic Park meeting had been intended to show the extent of Protestant support for home rule in the province, and to evince the government's support for the ULA. Instead, the hostility afforded Churchill by the unionist majority demonstrated the perilous position of liberals in Ulster; the ULA decided to refrain from holding meetings for a period.[71]

Tension increased further with the signing of the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant in September 1912. The Ulster Covenant, whose signatories pledged to use 'all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland', sought to demonstrate the unionist consensus among Ulster Protestants. David Fitzpatrick, in his recent analysis of Ulster's Covenanters and non-Covenanters, has determined that about 77% of Protestant men signed the document.[72] Who were the 23%? Fitzpatrick has determined that some of these individuals had sympathy with organisations such as the ULA. Furthermore, he finds that in the North Antrim area, which included Ballymoney, one-third of Protestant men and two-fifths of women did not sign.[73] The

evidence suggests that the ULA provided one of the principal sources of opposition to the Covenant. Although, in this heady climate, a number of individual Liberals were persuaded to sign the document, the ULA organisation argued against it. The ULA drew attention to the substantial number of Protestant non-Covenanters, and claimed that no consensus against home rule existed in the province.[74]

Clergymen non-Covenanters were forced to face the wrath of their indignant, Covenanting flock. But for home rule laity the situation was much worse. ULA members faced a campaign of violence and boycotting against them, which may have contributed to the decline and eventual demise of the organisation. As early as January 1909 T.W. Russell claimed there had been 834 cases of severe boycotting against Ulster liberals by unionists.[75] Russell had himself been attacked and injured after addressing a radical meeting in Dromore, County Down in 1903.[76] That month Russell entered into public dispute with Hugh Barrie, unionist member for North Derry, over the case of Robert Bailey, a Presbyterian elder from Barrie's constituency. Bailey, an elderly farmer, had his barn burned and was beaten and left for dead, owing, Russell alleged, to his membership of the ULA. Barrie denied any political connection to the events.[77] Contemporary newspapers include numerous accounts of similar persecution during this period.

Violence increased during the period 1912 to 1913. The violent ejection of 2,000 Catholic workers from the Belfast shipyards by Protestant unionists during this period has been well-documented. Less well-remembered is that 500 Protestant home rulers were likewise driven from the yards.[78] William Hamilton Davey sought to highlight the plight of these workers. He argued that, unlike the 1886 and 1893 riots, those of 1912 were not entirely sectarian in nature:

> The shipyard workers who have been assaulted and driven from their work include … Protestant Liberal and Labour men as well as Catholic nationalists, and indeed the feeling against the former is, if possible, more bitter.

I have had many interviews with Protestant workers in the shipyards who have had to flee for their lives, and they tell me no man with known progressive tendencies dare remain at his work. A form of catechism has been set up, and a man is asked: 1. Are you a Papist? 2. Are you a Liberal? 3. Are you a Socialist? 4. Are you an Independent Orangeman? If the answers are in the affirmative to any of these questions he is forthwith attacked by extremists…. Hundreds of Protestants … have incurred the hostility of fanatics because of their progressive views. … These Protestants entertain a strong feeling of resentment at the apathy of the police authorities.[79]

However, neither the unionist nor the nationalist press devoted much attention to the boycotting and intimidation that the ULA claimed its members endured. At their annual meeting in 1914, they described themselves as 'a body of men … who have to fight for their political faith against the most fearful odds and under circumstances not paralleled in any other part of the civilized world; subjected daily to threats, intimidation, ostracism, and boycott'.[80] Protestant progressives who retained allegiance to the ULA would find fewer radical allies than even five years before. The Independent Orange Order, which had expelled Crawford for his pro-home rule views in 1908, had gone into sharp decline: it had about nine active lodges in north-east Ulster in 1913.[81]

During this period of heightened tension in the province, one prominent Ulster liberal intellectual took the opportunity to issue a warning to his co-religionists. In 1913 Joseph Johnston, a County Tyrone-born economist and fellow of Trinity College Dublin, published *Civil war in Ulster.* This work, a concise polemic against Ulster unionism, claimed that home rule would have no negative affect on Protestantism in Ireland, and warned against the drift towards civil war.[82]

By early 1913 the ULA had itself begun to metamorphose into an explicitly Protestant home rule association. In January of that year a by-election was held in Derry city division. The IPP declined to run an official candidate, and instead fielded a ULA activist, David Cleghorn Hogg (c.1840-1914), who ran as a 'Protestant home ruler'. Hogg, a Scottish-born

Presbyterian who ran a large shirt-manufactory, had been prominent in liberal politics in the city since the 1860s. The *Irish Times* claimed that 'His selection is a confession by the Nationalists that they feared their inability to win with a Nationalist, and they have put up a Liberal in the hope of detaching some Protestant votes' from the unionists.[83] Hogg's candidacy prompted a major effort by various nationalist organisations, who understood the propaganda value of a Protestant home ruler's victory in the city.[84] Hogg's campaign speeches focussed on the impact partition would have on his southern co-religionists, telling one demonstration:

> Many of the Presbyterians outside Ulster lived in scattered districts, and in sparse numbers. Their congregations were not able to give them the support necessary for their sustenance, and it would simply mean that if Ulster and the rest of Ireland were separated, they would be deprived of their religious exercises. As a Protestant Home Ruler he could not understand how anyone could look with equanimity on such a state of things.[85]

Hogg's victory in the election, by a margin of only 57 votes, which meant that Ulster's home rulers could muster seventeen seats to the unionists' sixteen, prompted elation in nationalists, who passed numerous resolutions that congratulated the candidate on his victory, and congratulated themselves on their broad-mindedness in supporting him.[86]

Later that year, the Protestant home ruler tag was applied in even more dramatic fashion, under the influence of three anti-Carsonites whose views were more advanced than most ULA members. On 24 October 1913 a meeting of Protestant home rulers was held in James Brown Armour's home town of Ballymoney. The demonstration was organized by Captain Jack White, Alice Stopford Green, and Sir Roger Casement. Casement, the diplomat and humanitarian, had gradually come to advocate Irish independence. Alice Stopford Green, the daughter of the archdeacon of Meath, was a popular historian, who would go on to help fund the Howth gun-running in July 1914. Captain Jack White was an Antrim-born Boer War

veteran, the son of Field-Marshal Sir George White VC, the 'Hero of Ladysmith'. After leaving the army, White began to espouse Irish nationalism. Casement, Stopford Green, and White organized the event in the hope of demonstrating, in the wake of the signing of Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant by 237,368 Protestant men, that the province included a substantial dissident minority. The Ballymoney Protestant home rule meeting has received hagiographical treatment in nationalist historiography.[87] McMinn is dismissive, and suggests that the meeting was merely a nationalist mirage.[88]

Alice Stopford Green was appalled by unionist militarism, and hoped to use the meeting to

> let fly at all Irish Protestants. There they sit isolated on their little mounds of self-attributed virtues and boasting of their superior means of grace … [while] for lack of grace or graciousness their influence is nothing at all (unless they have a rifle to play with).[89]

Much of the organisation of the meeting was left to Armour, who had played little active part in Ulster politics since 1893.[90] White, Casement, and Stopford Green made speeches, alongside John Dinsmore, a Presbyterian JP and historian, and Alec Wilson, an Anglican accountant who was well-known in Belfast nationalist circles.

The Ballymoney meeting has been a much-misunderstood event. Scholars are united in viewing it as a *rara avis,* a seemingly spontaneous manifestation of latent and hitherto undisclosed Irish nationalism among a group of Ulster Protestants, prompted by the eccentric trio of Casement, Stopford Green, and White. In unionist historiography it is an aberration, the gathering of a 'little handful of cranks', which 'emphasised rather than disturbed' the great consensus.[91] For nationalists, the meeting represented a final irruption of a radical nationalist tradition that had existed among Ulster Protestants since the late-eighteenth

century.[92] Both interpretations are problematic. A focus on those who conceived the meeting, rather than those who attended it, has led to a skewed understanding of the event.

35 men have been identified as having attended or sending regrets to the Ballymoney meeting.[93] Of these, seventeen, or nearly half, have been identified as members of the ULA, including Armour, McElderry, Wilson, and Dinsmore. The meeting was, in effect, a ULA demonstration, given new, denominational guise, prompted by the rhetoric inherent in the Ulster Covenant and the formation of the Ulster Volunteers.[94] Rather than an anomaly in Ulster politics, the meeting was a manifestation of a substantial minority radical tradition with its origins in Gladstonian Liberalism, the IPHRA, Russellism, and latterly, the ULA.

The meeting, which was attended by about 500 people, passed two resolutions. The first repudiated the claim of Carson to represent the Protestants of north-east Ulster, and declared the unionist 'Provisional Government' an 'illegal and entirely non-representative body'. The second denigrated attempts, which it claimed were being made, to separate Irishmen and women of different creeds, into separate camps.[95]

The climax of the meeting came when White proposed a pro-home rule counter to the Ulster Covenant. The counter covenant pledged its signatories to ignore the 'Provisional Government' and to abide by the laws of an all-Ireland home rule parliament. The document employed language that was strikingly similar to Carson's Covenant.

> Being convinced in our conscience that Home Rule would not be disastrous to the national well-being in Ulster and that, moreover, the responsibility of self-government would strengthen the popular forces in other provinces, would pave the way to a civil and religious freedom which we do not now possess and give scope for a spirit of citizenship, we, whose names are underwritten, Irish citizens, Protestants, and loyal supporters of Irish nationality, relying under God on the proved good feeling and democratic instinct of our countrymen of other creeds, hereby pledge ourselves to stand by one another and our country in the troublous days that are before us, and more especially to help one another when our liberties are threatened by any non-statutory body that may be set up in Ulster or elsewhere. We intend to abide by the just laws of the lawful Parliament of Ireland until such

time as it may prove itself hostile to democracy. In sure confidence that God will stand by those who stand by the people, irrespective of class and creed, we hereunto subscribe our names.[96]

Having been endorsed by the meeting, the counter covenant was distributed throughout County Antrim (a perilous task) and attracted about 12,000 signatories.[97]

White, Casement and Stopford Green were disappointed with the aftermath of the meeting, which they hoped would spawn a popular movement that would undermine Carson. There were, however, two further Protestant home rule meetings in Ulster, which were held in Scarva and Saintfield, County Down.[98] One outcome of Ballymoney was a delegation, including White, Wilson, and Robert Mitchell Henry (1873-1950), the Queen's University Belfast professor of Latin, to Asquith. The delegation protested against the exclusion of Ulster from home rule, and claimed that only 20% of Ulster Volunteers would be willing to take arms against the government. They suggested that Asquith amend the home rule bill so as to allow a degree of autonomy to the north-eastern counties of Ulster, a compromise which they hoped would overcome some unionist objections to home rule.[99] Asquith listened politely to White and his fellow Liberals. When the prime minister secretly met Edward Carson, the unionist leader the following month, he suggested a variant of the 'home rule within home rule' compromise.[100] However, by late-1913, the impact of unionist organized resistance was too great, and nothing came of this initiative. By early-1914, the ULA had lost any political influence. Indeed, the period 1912-1914 saw lines hardening throughout Protestant Ulster. During this period the capacity for independent action by political dissidents reduced sharply; events of the following four years would leave even less room for dissenting opinion.

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The ULA strongly supported British involvement when war broke out in 1914. A pro-war stance could be expected of an organisation that was loyal to the Crown and in favour of retaining an imperial connection; also, like the IPP, ULA leaders hoped victory would lead to the swift implementation of an all-Ireland home rule settlement. It is noteworthy that in late 1914 ULA speakers addressed Irish National Volunteers demonstrations and cooperated with Joseph Devlin's organisation, rather than supporting the Ulster Volunteers.[101] The ULA sought to gain traction in this period by highlighting pro-German statements made by Ulster unionists during the home rule crisis.[102] However, the period 1914 to 1918 saw the movement sink into terminal decline. Grassroots activism seems to have largely ceased, and the leadership had few opportunities to contribute to public debate. The ULA seems to have mirrored the IPP, which, having agreed to shelve the home rule bill for the duration of the war, saw their official standing greatly diminish. The best indicator of the ULA's decline in importance relates to their treatment after the Easter Rising of 1916.

Of all the political groups in Ireland, Protestant home rulers in Ulster may have been most marginalized by the Rising. In negotiations following the insurrection, John Redmond's agreement to the principle of a partitioned Ireland (even if he believed it would be temporary) demonstrated that home rulers of all religions in Ulster could be jettisoned for the sake of a Dublin parliament.[103] Furthermore, the Ulster unionist belief that the Rising was an act of southern Catholic treachery further polarized northern politics, and reduced the moderates' capacity for independent action.

In the aftermath of the Rising, David Lloyd George entered into extensive parallel negotiations with the IPP and Ulster unionist party, and also corresponded with a large number of other political figures, in a desire to forge a consensus. Henry H. Graham made repeated attempts to secure a meeting with Lloyd George on behalf of the ULA.[104] Despite a colleague's advice that Ulster Liberals 'are not a huge number, but they are influential',[105]

Lloyd George refused to receive a delegation, and declined even to send a personal response.[106] By June 1916 Lloyd George had settled on a policy of the temporary or permanent exclusion of the six north-eastern counties. The ULA was an unwanted political complication – there was no room for Liberal sympathy. In effect, Ulster Liberalism was dead.

Most research on the 1918 general election in Ireland has focussed on the rout of the IPP and its displacement as principal nationalist party by Sinn Féin. The IPP took only six seats to Sinn Féin's 73, compared with 73 seats in December 1910. However, equally devastating was the collapse of the ULA. In December 1910 the party had contested seven seats and gained 19,003 votes. The fading of the ULA is indicative of the wider decline experienced by moderates due to the impact of the Great War, the Easter Rising, and latterly, the failure of the Irish Convention of 1917-1918.

In 1918 the ULA ran only one candidate, William Hamilton Davey, on a joint ticket with the IPP. Edward Carson, in a symbolic act, had denounced the 'treasonable' south and abandoned his Dublin University seat for Belfast Duncairn division.[107] At the last minute, Davey, who had volunteered for service in 1914, fought in France, and earned a majority, challenged Carson.[108] His intervention precipitated a bad-tempered campaign. Davey, who ran on a platform of dominion home rule, accused Carson of breaching the Ulster Covenant, by relinquishing claims to three Ulster counties, and of abandoning the Protestants of south and west Ireland. Carson retaliated by claiming that Davey was a Sinn Féiner, before being forced to publicly withdraw the allegation, under threat of suit.[109] Davey had little real chance of defeating the hero of Ulster unionism; the final result, 2,449 votes for Davey to 11,637 for Carson, demonstrated yet again, the failure of the Ulster Liberal project.

Although it only gained the adherence of a small number of Ulster Protestants, the existence of the Ulster Liberal Association serves to remind us of the diverse nature of Protestant society, particularly in the period before the third home rule crisis, Great War, and Easter Rising caused positions to harden, and saw moderate forces excluded from the public sphere. The presence of this movement suggests that the 1921 Northern Irish parliament election result, in which the Ulster Unionist Party carried forty out of fifty-two available seats, may not have been inevitable. Furthermore, the existence of other dissident groups, such as the Independent Orange Order, suggests a potential for co-operation that never quite came about. However, even had a larger, pro-home rule Protestant movement emerged, its members would have been similarly treated by their unionist co-religionists. Attacks and boycotting of home rulers, although of little interest to contemporaries then or historians until now, highlights the tendency for social groups to react with especial zeal when facing politically aberrant members of their own tribe. But even a peaceful Belfast dockyards would not have changed the result: during 1912 to 1916, ancient religious divisions had coalesced around mutually exclusionary political programmes: the Protestant home rule tradition, or any moderate tradition, could not overcome this.

[1] For accounts of this incident, see *Ulster Guardian* (*UG*), 17 Feb. 1912; *Irish Independent* (*II*), 13 Feb. 1912; *Ulster Herald,* 17 Feb. 1912; *Sydney Morning Herald,* 13 Feb. 1912.

[2] Paul Bew, Peter Gibbon, Henry Patterson, *Northern Ireland, 1921-2001: political forces and social classes* (London, 2002 (1st ed. 1995)).

[3] Graham Walker, 'The Northern Ireland Labour Party in the 1920s', *Saothar,* Vol. 10 (1984), pp. 19-30; Christopher Norton, 'Creating jobs, manufacturing unity: Ulster unionism and mass unemployment, 1922-34', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Summer 2001), pp. 1-14.

[4] Colin Reid, 'Protestant challenges to the "Protestant state": Ulster unionism and independent unionism in Northern Ireland, 1921-1939', *Twentieth Century British history*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 2008, pp. 419-45.

[5] Gerald R. Hall, *Ulster liberalism, 1778-1876: the middle path* (Dublin, 2009).

[6] Frank Thompson, *The end of liberal Ulster: land agitation and land reform, 1868-1886* (Belfast, 2001); Frank Wright, *Two lands on one soil: Ulster politics before home rule* (Dublin, 1996); Hall, *Ulster liberalism*; Brian M. Walker, *Ulster politics: the formative years, 1868-86* (Belfast, 1989).

[7] Alvin Jackson, *The Ulster Party: Irish unionists in the House of Commons, 1884-1911*, p. 40.

[8] These developments are dealt with, directly or indirectly, in several noteworthy works, including: Graham Walker, *A history of the Ulster unionist party: protest, pragmatism and pessimism* (Manchester and New York, 2004); John Harbinson, *The Ulster unionist party, 1882-1973: its development and organisation* (Belfast, 1973); David Burnett, 'The modernisation of Unionism, 1892-1914?', in Richard English and Graham Walker eds. *Unionism in modern Ireland: new perspectives on politics and culture* (New York, 1996), pp. 41-62; Alvin Jackson, 'Irish unionism, 1870-1922', in D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day eds., in *Defenders of the Union: a survey of British and Irish unionism since 1801* (London and New York, 2001), pp. 115-36; Patrick Buckland, *Ulster unionism and the origins of Northern Ireland, 1886-1922* (Dublin, 1973).

[9] The literature on Ulster unionism and the home rule crisis is vast: see Alan F. Parkinson, *Friends in high places: Ulster's resistance to Irish home rule, 1912-14* (Belfast, 2012), for a fine recent survey. The related field of Irish constitutional crisis and British high politics is of similar size: for a recent penetrating study, see Ronan Fanning, *Fatal path: British government and Irish revolution 1910–22* (London, 2013).

[10] See for example, J.R.B. McMinn, 'Liberalism in North Antrim, 1900-14', *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 89 (May, 1982), pp. 17-29; Richard McMinn, 'The myth of "Route" liberalism in County Antrim, 1869-1900', *Éire-Ireland*, Vol. 17, no. 1 (spring, 1982), pp 137-49; Richard McMinn, 'Presbyterianism and politics in Ulster, 1871-1906', *Studia Hibernica*, No. 21 (1981), pp. 127-46; Richard McMinn, 'The Ballymoney meeting of 1913 – a nationalist mirage?', *The Glynns*, 12 (1984), pp. 34-9; J.R.B. McMinn, *Against the tide: a calendar of the papers of Rev. J.B. Armour, Irish Presbyterian minister and home ruler, 1869-1914* (Belfast, 1985); Richard McMinn, review of *The dissenting voice: Protestant democracy in Ulster from plantation to partition* by Flann Campbell, *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 111 (May, 1993), pp. 323-25. Cf. a later, co-written

article, Richard McMinn, Éamon Phoenix and Joanne Beggs, 'Jeremiah Jordan M.P. (1830-1911): Protestant home ruler or "Protestant renegade"?', *Irish Historical Studies,* Vol. 36, No. 143 (May 2009), pp. 349-67.

[11] McMinn, 'Liberalism in North Antrim', pp. 28, 18. See also, McMinn, 'The Ballymoney meeting of 1913 –a nationalist mirage?'. For this meeting, see below.

[12] McMinn, 'Liberalism in North Antrim', p. 18.

[13] R.G. Glendinning: McMinn, 'Liberalism in North Antrim', pp. 24, 27.

[14] Ulster Liberal Unionist Association, *The Ulster Liberal Unionist Association: a sketch of its history, 1885-1914* (Belfast, 1913); Jonathan Parry, *The rise and fall of liberal government in Victorian Britain* (Yale, 1993), p. 299.

[15] See, for example, Ulster Liberal Unionist Association, *The Ulster Liberal Unionist Association*, pp. 10, 16, 17-18, 23, 40-1, 112; *North and South*, 7 May, 4 June 1887; *UG*, 16 Jan. 1909.

[16] For evidence of north/south animus, chiefly due to the Ulstermen's desire to control the movement, see National Library of Ireland (NLI), MS 3657, minute book of Dublin branch of the Irish Protestant Home Rule Association (IPHRA), entries for 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 14 June 1886.

[17] James Loughlin, 'The Irish Protestant Home Rule Association and nationalist politics, 1886-93', in *Irish Historical Studies,* Vol. 14, no. 95 (May 1985), pp. 341-60, at pp. 343-44.

[18] R.F. Foster, *WB Yeats: a life, I: the apprentice mage 1865-1914* (Oxford and New York, 1997), pp. 39-41.

[19] *North and South*, 5, 26 Mar., 25 June 1887; Stephen Gwynn, *Experiences of a literary man* (London, 1926), p. 57.

[20] Loughlin, 'The Irish Protestant Home Rule Association', pp. 343-44; Oliver McCann, 'The Protestant home rule movement, 1886-1895', (MA thesis, University College Dublin, 1972), pp. 20-37.

[21] The IPHRA took 9,283 votes, to the unionists' 26,446, amounting to 35% of the poll.

[22] McCann, 'The Protestant home rule movement', pp. 99-110.

[23] McMinn, *Against the tide*, pp. xxxi-xxxv.

[24] W.S. Armour, *Armour of Ballymoney* (London, 1934), p. 104. See also McMinn, *Against the tide*, pp. xxxix-xlii; *Minutes of the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland,* Vol. 8, 1893, pp. 603-4.

[25] McMinn, *Against the tide*, pp. xliii-xliv; Armour, *Armour of Ballymoney*, p. 121. For the attempts to attain signatures, frequently impeded by pressure from Presbyterian peers, see [T.?] Irwin to Armour, 6 June 1893; Rev. Richard Lyttle to Armour, 9 June 1893; John Orr to Armour, 10 June 1893; William Craig to Armour, 19

June 1893; William C. McCullough to Armour, 21 June 1893; John Maxwell to Armour, 28 June 1893; J. Scott to Armour 21 July 1893, in McMinn, *Against the tide,* pp. 16-22.

[26] For an account of this group, see Alvin Jackson, 'Irish Unionism and the Russellite threat, 1894-1906', *Irish Historical Studies,* Vol. 25, No. 100 (Nov., 1987), pp. 376-404.

[27] *Pall Mall Gazette 'Extra': the popular handbook to the new House of Commons,* 1906, p. 140.

[28] McMinn, 'Liberalism in North Antrim', p. 17.

[29] Jackson, 'Irish Unionism and the Russellite Threat', p. 399.

[30] *UG,* 28 Apr. 1906. Four former Russellite candidates went on to stand in the ULA interest: T.W. Russell; R.G. Glendinning; Samuel Robert Keightly; and James Woods.

[31] *Irish Times* (*IT*), 21 Apr. 1906.

[32] See, for example, *IT,* 12 Nov. 1912, 16 May 1916.

[33] *IT,* 23 Oct. 1906.

[34] Nominal data for ULA activists derived from: *UG,* 9, 16, 23 Jan. 1909, 29 Jan., 2 Apr., 10 Dec. 1910, 23 Sept. 1911, 6 Jan., 3, 10, 17 Feb., 6, 27 Apr. 1912, 4 Apr. 1914. Prosopographical data from this and other sets derived in most part from the Census of Ireland, 1901, and Census of Ireland, 1911 [available online]. Reference was made a wide variety of other sources, including: James McGuire and James Quinn eds., *Dictionary of Irish biography* (Cambridge, 2009); *Thom's Irish almanac and official directory* (Dublin, published annually); and Bernard Burke, *Burke's genealogical and heraldic history of the landed gentry of Ireland* (4th ed., L.G. Pine ed., London, 1958).

[35] Nominal data derived from: *UG,* 17 Oct. 1908, 23 Oct., 25 Dec. 1909, 23 Apr. 1910, 8 Mar. 1913; *IT,* 16 Oct., 17 Nov., 30 Apr., 17 Dec. 1909, 19 Apr. 1910, 20 July 1912, 4 Feb. 1920; *Freeman's Journal* (*FJ*), 9 Oct., 3 Nov. 1908, 17 Dec. 1909, 29 Nov. 1910, 28 Feb. 1913, *II,* 2 July 1914, *Irish Press,* 18 Oct. 1937; James G. Douglas, *Memoirs of Senator James G. Douglas (1887-1954): concerned citizen* (J. Anthony Gaughan ed.) (Dublin, 1998), p. 50; William Seville to Lord Castletown, 21 Apr. 1909, Dublin, NLI, Castletown papers, MS 35,320 (8). [N=122].

[36] For the IPHRA leadership, see Loughlin, 'The Irish Protestant Home Rule Association', p. 343

[37] *IT,* 18, 21 July 1906; *Donegal News,* 20 Jan. 1912; McMinn, *Against the tide,* p. xlvii; J.W. Kirk to Rev. James Brown Armour, 7 Feb. 1906, Belfast, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), Armour papers; Henry H. Graham to Robert Carson, 18 Oct. 1913, PRONI, T.2077/13. Names of ULA activists checked against specimen years of *Thom's Irish almanac and official directory*.

[38] London *Times*, 13 Sept. 1948; U.H. Hussey de Burgh, *The landowners of Ireland* (Dublin, 1878), p. 189.

[39] In 1911, the Protestant proportion of each Ulster county or county borough was approximately as follows: Antrim, 79.5%; Armagh, 54.7%; Belfast, 75.9%; Cavan, 18.5%; Donegal, 21%; Down, 68.5%; Fermanagh, 43.8%; Derry County, 58.5%; Derry County Borough, 43.8%; Monaghan, 25.3%; Tyrone, 44.6%: W.E. Vaughan and A.J. Fitzpatrick, *Irish historical statistics: population, 1821-1971* (Dublin, 1978), pp. 66-8.

[40] Henry Patterson, 'Sectarianism revisited: the provisional IRA campaign in a border region of Northern Ireland', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Volume 22, Issue 3, 2010, pp. 337-56.

[41] See, for example, *UG*, 4 May, 6 July, 21 Sept. 1907. See also, below.

[42] *UG*, 11, 18, 25 May, 1 June 1907.

[43] For the IOO, see John W. Boyle, 'The Belfast Protestant Association and the Independent Orange Order, 1901-10', *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 50 (Sept., 1962), pp. 117-52; Henry Patterson, 'Independent Orangeism and class conflict in Edwardian Belfast: a reinterpretation', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature,* Vol. 80C (1980), pp. 1-27; Peter Murray, 'Radical way forward or sectarian cul-de-sac? Lindsay Crawford and Independent Orangeism reassessed', *Saothar* 27 (2002), pp. 31-42.

[44] See Conor Morrissey, 'Protestant nationalists in Ireland, 1900-1923', unpublished PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin (2015), ch. 2.

[45] *Irish Protestant*, 22 July 1905.

[46] *Irish Protestant*, 23 Jan. 1904.

[47] Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, Belfast (GOLI), Independent Orange Order collection, *Independent Orange Institution of Ireland, Grand Lodge report, 1907* (Belfast, 1907).

[48] See report, *UG*, 12 Jan. 1907.

[49] See *UG*, 12, 26 Jan., 2, 9, 16 Feb. 1907.

[50] The directors were Hugh Mack, Henry Havelock Graham, Samuel Robert Keightly, and John R. Moorhead.

[51] *IT*, 4 Sept. 1920.

[52] See below.

[53] *UG*, 10 Dec. 1910.

[54] *Ulster Herald*, 2 Sept. 1911; *IT*, 19 July 1913.

[55] 25,506 for the Ulster Unionist Party; 20,339 for the ULA.

[56] For a discussion, see Jackson, *The Ulster party*, pp. 270-271.

[57] *Northern Constitution,* 1 Nov. 1913, qu. in McMinn, *Against the tide*, p. lvii.

[58] *FJ*, 15 Nov. 1913.

[59] *Donegal News*, 4 May 1912

[60] *UG*, 10 Dec. 1910.

[61] 24,874 for the Ulster Unionist Party; 19,003 for the ULA.

[62] Ulster Liberal Association, *What liberalism has done for the people: points in the liberal policy and in the liberal record* (Belfast, 1913), pp. 3, 4, 8, 22, 6.

[63] See below. For reference to 'Rotten Protestants', see, for example, *UG*, 10 Feb. 1912, *FJ*, 4 Apr., 3 Nov. 1917; Gwynn, *Experiences of a literary man*, p. 277.

[64] *FJ*, 26 Jan. 1912. See also, Armour, *Armour of Ballymoney*, pp. 252-5.

[65] *II*, 24 Jan. 1912.

[66] PRONI, D2846/1/2/1/2, clipping from the *Belfast News-Letter*, 27 Jan. 1912.

[67] *UG*, 3 Feb. 1912; PRONI, D2846/1/2/1/2, clipping from an unknown newspaper, 26 Jan. 1912; PRONI, D2846/1/2/1/3, clipping from the *Irish News*, 6 Feb. 1912.

[68] *UG*, 10 Feb. 1912.

[69] *IT*, 9 Feb. 1912; *Irish Press*, 25 Jan. 1965. See also, Roy Jenkins, *Churchill* (London, 2001), pp. 234-236.

[70] *UG*, 10 Feb. 1912. For an extended discussion of this speech, see Paul Bew, *Churchill and Ireland* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 52-8.

[71] *Donegal News*, 6 Dec. 1913.

[72] David Fitzpatrick, *Descendancy: Irish Protestant histories since 1795* (Cambridge, 2014), p. 108.

[73] Ibid., pp. 142, 144.

[74] Ulster Liberal Association, *What liberalism has done for the people*, p. 26.

[75] *Ulster Herald*, 16 Jan. 1909.

[76] *Cork Constitution*, 29 Jan. 1903.

[77] *UG*, 16, 23 Jan. 1909.

[78] For contemporary references to attacks on Protestant home rulers in Belfast, especially ship workers, see: Rosamond Stephen to John Baptist Crozier, archbishop of Armagh, 30 July 1912, Dublin, Representative Church Body Library, Rosamond Stephen papers; *UG*, 20, 27 Apr., 27 July, 3, 10 Aug. 1912; House of Commons debates, 31 July 1912 vol. 41, 2091-8, 2111-2113, 2122-27, 2129-33, 2148-9; *Connaught Tribune*, 29 Nov. 1913; *Connaught Telegraph*, 14 Sept. 1912, 5 Apr. 1913, 9 May 1914; *FJ*, 26, 28 Sept. 1912, 29 Mar.,

30 Apr. 1913; *Anglo-Celt*, 3 May, 3, 10, 17, 24 Aug. 1912; *Southern Star*, 21 Sept. 1913; *II*, 7 Nov. 1913; *Limerick Leader*, 7 Aug. 1912; *Manchester Guardian*, 18 Sept. 1912.

[79] *Manchester Guardian*, 8 July 1912.

[80] *UG*, 4 Apr. 1914.

[81] GOLI, Independent Orange Order collection, *Orange Independent*, Jan., May 1913.

[82] Joseph Johnston, *Civil war in Ulster: its objects and probable results* (Dublin, 1913).

[83] *IT*, 8 Jan. 1913.

[84] Osborne O'Reilly to George Fitzhardinge Berkeley, 23 Jan. 1913; Osborne O'Reilly to George Fitzhardinge Berkeley, 4 Mar. 1913; Osborne O'Reilly to George Fitzhardinge Berkeley, 6 Feb. 1913, Cork City and County Archives, Berkeley papers, PR12.

[85] *Weekly Irish Times*, 18 Jan. 1913.

[86] *FJ*, 6 Feb. 1913 (South-east Cork United Irish League (UIL) executive); *FJ*, 1 Feb. 1913 (Mountjoy Ward branch of the UIL, Dublin City); *Southern Star*, 8 Feb. 1913 (Bandon Town Commission, Co. Cork); *Anglo-Celt*, 26 July 1913 (East Cavan UIL); *Donegal News*, 9 Aug. 1913 (UIL branch in Ballyliffin, Co. Donegal); *Anglo-Celt*, 22 Mar. 1913 (Knockbride east division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Co. Cavan).

[87] From accounts or analysis of the meeting listed, broadly-speaking, from hostile to sympathetic, see: Ronald McNeill, *Ulster's stand for the union* (London, 1922), p. 158; McMinn, 'The Ballymoney meeting of 1913 –a nationalist mirage?'; McMinn, 'Liberalism in North Antrim', p. 28; McMinn, *Against the tide*, pp. liv-lviii; Desmond Bowen, *History and the shaping of Irish Protestantism* (New York, 1995); Ullans Speakers Association, *A ripple in the pond: the home rule revolt in North Antrim* (Ballymoney, 2013); R.B. McDowell, *Alice Stopford Green: a passionate historian* (Dublin, 1967), pp. 93-5; B.L. Reid, *The lives of Roger Casement* (New Haven and London, 1976), pp. 178-9; Jonathan Bardon, *A history of Ulster* (Belfast, 1992), pp. 440-1; Eamon Phoenix et al. eds. *Feis na nGleann: a century of Gaelic culture in the Antrim Glens* (Belfast, 2005), pp. 59-61; Flann Campbell, *The dissenting voice: Protestant democracy in Ulster from plantation to partition* (Dublin, 1991) pp. 419-21; Armour, *Armour of Ballymoney*, pp. 280-3; Bill O'Brien, *Alternative Ulster covenant* (Dublin, 2013).

[88] McMinn, 'The Ballymoney meeting of 1913 –a nationalist mirage?'.

[89] Alice Stopford Green, qu. in McDowell, *Alice Stopford Green*, p. 94.

[90] Phoenix, *Feis na nGleann*, p. 60. See also, James Brown Armour to W.S. Armour, 27 Oct. 1913; James Brown Armour to J.B.M. Armour [n.d. Oct.? 1913], in McMinn, *Against the tide*, pp. 133-135.

[91] McNeill, *Ulster's stand for the union,* p. 158.

[92] For a recent account, see O'Brien, *Alternative Ulster covenant.*

[93] *North Antrim Standard,* 30 Oct. 1913; *UG,* 1 Nov. 1913. 15 women have also been identified; these have been excluded from the following calculation, as the *Ulster Guardian* almost never provided names of women who attended ULA meetings – their inclusion in the set would skew the figure.

[94] The *North Antrim Standard* described the event as a 'meeting of Liberals': 30 Oct. 1913. See also *Belfast News-Letter,* 26 Nov. 1913.

[95] *UG,* 1 Nov. 1913. For a full account of the speeches, see [Various authors], *A Protestant protest: Ballymoney, Oct. 24th 1913* (Ballymoney, 1913).

[96] Text of counter-covenant given in Ullans Speakers Association, *A ripple in the pond,* p. 16.

[97] O'Brien, *Alternative Ulster covenant,* p. 7.

[98] *Donegal News,* 8 Nov., 6 Dec. 1913. For Roger Casement's delighted reaction to the Scarva meeting, see Roger Casement to Alice Stopford Green, 4 Nov. 1913, NLI Roger Casement additional papers, MS 36,204/1.

[99] *Belfast News-Letter,* 26 Nov. 1913.

[100] Fanning, *Fatal path,* pp. 96-7.

[101] *II,* 25 Nov. 1914.

[102] Ulster Liberal Association, *The Kaiser's Ulster friends: pro-German speeches by prominent Carsonites* (np, 1914).

[103] Fanning, *Fatal path,* pp. 145-9.

[104] Henry H. Graham to David Lloyd George, 7 June 1916, London, Parliamentary Archives, (PAL), Lloyd George papers, D/14/3.

[105] John Gulland to David Lloyd George, 28 June 1916, PAL, Lloyd George papers, D/14/3.

[106] Office of David Lloyd George to Henry H. Graham, 29 June 1916, PAL, Lloyd George papers, D/14/3.

[107] *UG,* 23, 30 Nov., 1918.

[108] *UG,* 14 Dec. 1918.

[109] *UG,* 14 Dec. 1918. Davey eventually sued Carson for libel, and sought £5,000 damages. The case was withdrawn when Carson offered a further apology in court: *Manchester Guardian,* 26 Apr. 1919.